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SUBJECT: WHITHER EU GUINEA-BISSAU SECURITY SECTOR REFORM?

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Classified By: POL Minister-Counselor Christopher Davis for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On December 17, Leonardo Sanchez, a Spanish diplomat who will chair the EU's civilian crisis management working group under the incoming Spanish Presidency, told PolOff that a mandated strategic review of the EU's security sector reform (SSR) mission in Guinea-Bissau could set the stage for the termination of that mission in May 2010, when its mandate expires. Sanchez said the EU Council Secretariat will prepare a strategic review paper for discussion by Political and Security Committee Ambassadors in January 2010, as requested by EU Foreign and Defense Ministers during their meeting in November. Sanchez said he could not pre-judge the results of the discussion among Ambassadors, but said mission closure is possible. During a meeting in November, Council Secretariat officials commented offhand that the strategic review could be the first step towards the EU turning over responsibilities for SSR to the UN and other actors. The official Conclusions issued at the November ministers' meeting highlighted "recent positive developments in Guinea-Bissau," suggesting the EU is looking to declare success before closing down its SSR mission.

¶2. (C) Comment: The SSR mission has been a focus of EU engagement in Guinea-Bissau since its inception in June 2008. The United States has been working for over a year to provide a prosecutorial advisor to the EU SSR mission, but we have not overcome administrative details to finalize our contribution (reftel). A signal of our political support for continued EU SSR engagement in Guinea-Bissau, coupled with a final agreement on the secondment of a U.S. prosecutorial advisor to the mission, could encourage the EU to remain engaged beyond the end of its mandate in May 2010. The 28 January 2010 U.S.-EU troika on African issues presents an opportunity to send a strong message. End Comment.

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